

by Marty Davis

David and Goliath

Candidate could rescue Oregonians from Gordon Smith's conservative stranglehold

Who is Steve Novick, and why is he on the cover of *Just Out*? Novick is the first, and so far only, announced candidate for the U.S. Senate seat held by Republican Gordon Smith. In our featured interview, you will learn that Novick has never held elected office and is yet to be backed, or even particularly acknowledged, by party higher-ups and major press. Everyone seems to be waiting and hoping for some super candidate to drop out of the sky to rescue Oregonians from the conservative stranglehold of the now-considered-vulnerable Sen. Smith.

All of Oregon's congressional delegation has taken a pass at running against Smith. Now hopeful eyes turn toward Salem and an awaited announcement from Oregon House Speaker Jeff Merkley. Merkley, however, has young children and a good standing in Salem, and it doesn't seem likely that he'll be willing to step up and take the challenge. Like it or not, a decision by Merkley to not run could leave Novick with the starring role in a revival of *David and Goliath*. And that's why we need to start getting to know the man who just might bring down Smith.

Similar to Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler, who strongly courted gay voters, Novick comes to this race with light credentials of advocacy or a strong established record of action involving gay civil rights issues. In lieu of a solid history of support, we will receive his promises to work harder and do more in the future. Will promises and pledges be enough to earn your vote?

Novick is on the cover of *Just Out* as a representation of the many candidates that will come to our community and to our pages in the 16 months leading up to the general election of 2008. By getting an early start on profiles and questionnaires, we will be able to determine who needs to be shored up in which areas. We will set forth our expectations of what needs to be accomplished and pledged in return for our sought-after votes. We start this process with Steve Novick.

Recently I found myself at the monthly board meeting of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court. While waiting for the meeting to start, I looked around the room and noticed two things. One, there were a lot of people in attendance—a good sign always for any organization. Secondly, I realized that it has been far too long since I'd been to one of those meetings and that there were few familiar faces in the room. This, too, is a good sign for an organization. It indicates that while past leadership has moved on, there was left in place a strong enough organization for the next members to grow and perpetuate.

ISRC is an organization rich in history and good work. While titles and pageantry might not be everyone's cup of tea, let's still give credit where credit is due and hold this group in high regard for keeping itself going, especially after a couple of rough years.

The summer of 2007 will be remembered as a time of new faces and new energy in the leadership of our community. I've recently had the opportunity to spend time in conversation with both Basic Rights Oregon executive director John Hummel and Q Center executive director Kendall Clawson. Meeting both of these people has left me feeling confident and optimistic, excited even, about the direction their key organizations will be taking.

Even though there appears to be a drowsy calmness to the summer, we must not forget that signature gathering is under way to place initiatives on the ballot undoing the positive gains attained with this year's passage of Senate Bill 2 and House Bill 2007. Hummel is confident that our opposition will be able to gather the required amount of signatures and that, once again, we will face a ballot battle. We must not lose sight of the fact that all gains achieved recently could be stricken away without ever having been actualized. In the coming weeks you will hear much more about the roles that you will be asked to take on—once again.

Congratulations to the winner of Portland's LaFemme Magnifique 2007, BeBe J, and her first runner-up, Karla Crawford. This was my first time to attend a LaFemme pageant, and I quickly discovered that this is definitely not your average drag queen show. While all drag shows are entertaining, contenders for this title go beyond the norm. These were visions to behold, decked out in stunning outfits and décor. The showgirl portion of the competition had the girls strutting about in headdresses that would rival any Las Vegas performer. I can't imagine how they maneuvered their designs backstage, let alone perched them on their heads in a manner allowing for movement.

Here's the best part of all this: You, too, have a chance to see all this and more as the LaFemme Magnifique International Pageant comes to Portland on Sept. 2. Put aside all your old notions about drag shows and get yourself tickets to this event. It will be dazzling, I tell you, simply dazzling. And don't we all need a little dazzle in our lives? **10**

To view photos from LAFEMME MAGNIFIQUE 2007 visit the photo gallery at www.justout.com.



FEATURE

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Does Steve Novick speak for Oregon?

NEWS

8-21 NORTHWEST

Benefit concert planned; abuser sentenced; judge rules for same-sex parents; Portland Pride breaks records; hetero allies campaign launches; vote for SMYRC; PFLAG addresses anti-gay conference; events benefit eastern Oregon; BRO holds immigration workshop

16-17 NATIONAL

Gays oppose Holsinger; gay-focused presidential debate scheduled; hate crimes bill moves to Senate; suicide prevention hotline raises record funds; gay film preservation archives doubles; Gay Games losing trend reversed; anti-gay senator cops to sex scandal

18-19 WORLD

Pride celebrated worldwide; anti-Luzhkov protesters arrested in Moscow; new Buenos Aires mayor was once anti-gay; gays to be protected in new Thai constitution

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New York Minutes



Darcelle XV (left) and Roxy LeRoy (right) congratulate the winner of Portland's LaFemme Magnifique 2007, BeBe J, and her first runner-up, Karla Crawford.

